DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 286 043 CE 048 349

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TITLE Teaching and Serving Adults through Vocational-Technical Education.
PUB DATE Sep 87
NOTE 31p.; Paper presented at the Adult Coordinators' Conference (Oak Hill, WV, September 23-25, 1987).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Basic Education; Adult Education; *Adult Learning; Adult Literacy; *Adult Students; *Adult Vocational Education; *Andragogy; Educational Needs; Employer Attitudes; Labor Needs; *Marketing; Postsecondary Education; Public Relations; Student Motivation; *Student Recruitment; Technical Education
IDENTIFIERS West Virginia

ABSTRACT

This paper presents an overview of the need for adult education, surveys the theory behind adult education, discusses the reasons why adults do not participate in adult education, and outlines marketing strategies that may induce adults to participate in greater numbers. The first part of the paper cites the need for educational reform, noting that many workers are untrained for the jobs that society has to offer and that millions of illiterate students are graduating from high school. It is suggested that adult education is more important than ever for these students as well as for those bright students who obtain college degrees but find little opportunity for jobs. In the next section of the paper, adult education theory is reviewed, particularly the ideas of Malcolm Knowles, and eight principles of adult learning are listed. Following this review is an examination of the reasons why adults participate in adult education and the factors (situational, institutional, and dispositional) that prevent them from participating. Finally, it is suggested that adult education providers should do market research in order to determine the needs of their potential clients and set up programs that serve those needs. Various types of recruitment strategies are examined and listed both in order of effectiveness and in order of use. The paper concludes with some questions about adult education in West Virginia and reasons why adult education is very much needed to help people improve their lives. (KC)

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TEACHING AND SERVING ADULTS THROUGH VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION

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SPEECH GIVEN AT THE
1987 ADULT COORDINATORS' CONFERENCE
OAK HILL HOLIDAY INN
OAK HILL, WEST VIRGINIA
SEPTEMBER 23-25, 1987

TEACHING AND SERVING ADULTS
THROUGH VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION

I appreciate the opportunity to share some personal thoughts and research findings on teaching and serving adults. Having grown up in a coal camp just 10 miles or so down the road, and recognizing that the principal of my high school graduation class is in the audience, I consider this a unique opportunity. Perhaps it is also fitting that this conference is being held in the coalfields of southern West Virginia, an area that is undergoing much change. The adults in this area need the best leadership and educational opportunities that you people in adult education can offer. Adult education offerings, especially those in vocational-technical education, will play a key role in helping these people, and all citizens of our state, obtain economic prosperity and improve their quality of life.

Our society is in a time of rapid change. Everyday in America (13):

- 108,000 of us move to a different home, and 18,000 move to another state, as the national "center of population" creeps to the southwest.

- 40 Americans celebrate their 100th birthday, 5,800 turn 65, and 8,000 try to forget their 40th birthdays.

- 13,000 people get married, while 6,300 get divorced.

- 167 businesses go bankrupt, while 689 new ones are started.

Of special importance to those of us here are the changes and reforms in education. Not since the launching of Sputnik I in 1957 has the American public expressed more interest in education than the current movement for educational reform. More than 100 national reports have concluded that there is a crisis in American education.(6) Most of the reports lead one to believe that our nation is "at risk" or "in jeopardy" unless major educational reform programs are initiated, especially in secondary education.

More than 300 state commissions have been established to review educational policies and practices.(8) As you probably know, there are two blue ribbon commissions currently investigating education in West Virginia: one deals with school finance, the other with school reform. As the number of reports fill the desks of legislators, business leaders, and educators, the general public is demanding action. Education at all levels must be molded to accommodate a diverse clientele who seek an education for working and living in a highly technological and information-oriented society. It is very likely that major changes will be needed in adult education to serve its clientele groups.(4)

Perhaps educational reform is needed. Remedial training of workers is now provided by a third of all major corporations. David Kearns, Chairman of Xerox Corporation suggests that (5, p.67):

> American business will have to hire more than a million new service and production workers a year who can't read, write or count. Teaching them how and absorbing the lost productivity while they are learning will cost industry $25 billion a year for as long as it takes.

You people in adult basic education have reason to work hard and give people a second chance to obtain a high school equivalency diploma. At a Business/Education Partnership Conference sponsored by the West Virginia Education Fund last November, Harold Hodgkinson, Senior Fellow of the American Council on Education, stated that 44 percent of the adults in West Virginia do not read well.(21) Nationwide, nearly a million students graduate from high school each year unable to read and write, and 1 in 4 never graduate at all.(5)

Will the current reform movement for excellence in American education provide a citizenry capable of working in a highly technological and increasingly sophisticated society? Most of the recommendations of educational reformers call for a return to the basics, better teachers with more accountability, more stringent (and longer) teacher education programs, more time on tasks, a longer school year, better discipline, more effective use of technology in education, more courses in "academic" subjects at the high school level, and increased admission requirements to 4-year colleges and universities. In my opinion, however, more attention must be paid to the interests and aspirations of both high school youth and adult learners.

Some public high schools in this country consider student performance on the ACT or SAT as their major measure of effectiveness, and may have developed a philosophy of "select the best and shoot the rest." Major efforts are extended to help the best and brightest students, while the majority of students pass through an educational wasteland offered as general education and the path of least resistance. Too often, vocational teachers are asked to salvage students already labeled "loosers," and give them a trade for which they are unprepared to learn. In the final analysis, you people in adult education are called upon to help these students increase their self-worth and develop vocational and life-coping skills needed to succeed in our society.

In his recent book entitled The Neglected Majority, Dale Parnell writes that society must recognize that 3 out of 4 high school students will probably not earn a baccalaureate degree.(14) He discusses the negligence of the current reform movement in education to address the needs of these youth. In my opinion, the best education for the majority of students may in fact be a high school curriculum that includes an integration of academic and vocational courses, followed by an additional 1 or 2 years of adult vocational-technical education courses. Those educators who advocate that only "think-oriented" jobs are important to society and "hand-oriented" jobs are for those who can't think, are doing students and society a grave disservice. Education must not be perceived as an escape from work, but as preparation for life and the workplace.

In 1986, the National Alliance of Business released their report entitled Employment Policies: Looking To The Year 2000.(12) The report discusses major trends in the U.S. workforce and workplace, and provides strategies for dealing with the changes being faced by our country. Among their findings was that by 1990, an estimated 3 out of 4 jobs will require some education or technical training beyond high school, but the number of jobs requiring a 4-year college degree is not expected to change significantly.

The 1980 Census revealed that only 17 percent of the American population 25 years of age and older held a baccalaureate degree. Perhaps it is time to recognize that the American dream for education beyond high school--even considering the substantial incentives of federal loan programs and access to higher education in the last 20 years--should not be automatically interpreted to mean the baccalaureate degree.

This does not mean that we should not encourage students to set high educational goals. But, it does mean that we should give all high school students enough academic and vocational courses to prepare them for life and the workplace. To "select the best and shoot the rest" more often than not will result in a majority of graduates who are underemployed or underprepared.

Ladies and gentlemen, all is not well among our brightest youth in America today. The 18th annual survey of "Who's Who Among American High School Students" reveals that 1 out of 3 top high school students have considered suicide. A feeling of personal worthlessness, feeling of isolation and loneliness, and pressure to achieve were the three most cited reasons for teen suicide.(20)

Last Thursday, the U.S. Constitution turned 200 years old. I wonder if any of those who created the Constitution thought it would guide a society where children do not have time to grow up. What attitudes will these pre-adults have about their fellow citizens, the environment, or the desire to participate in adult education?

Unfortunately, many of the "best and brightest" graduates will obtain a college degree for which there is limited occupational opportunity. And the "neglected" high school graduates will have few skills needed for success in the workplace. Both groups are frustrated and will make up a large percentage of the clientele whom you people in adult education must serve.

You may wonder why I have addressed the issue of educational reform, realizing that adult education seldom makes the headlines in the numerous reports calling for reform. This is precisely the point! Adult education is seldom mentioned but the reprecussions of educational reform at the secondary level will have major implications for adult education, especially vocational-technical education.

We must begin to view teaching and serving adults, not as a luxury in the educational system, but as a necessity for improving the socio-economic well-being of our citizens. We in West Virginia are fortunate. As you heard from Bill Wilcox a few minutes ago, the report on refocusing and redesigning vocational education brings adult education to the forefront of the educational scene in West Virginia.(18) Before I discuss some of the reasons why adults do and do not participate in adult education, let us first turn our attention to the teaching of adults.

Each of you has probably read and heard much about andragogy, made popular by Malcolm Knowles in his text The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy Versus Pedagogy.(9) He defined andragogy as the art and science of helping adults learn. I wish only to highlight some basic principles of adult learning.

First, is the need to recognize that adults maintain the ability to learn, assuming they do not have physical impairments which hinder learning, such as loss of hearing. Fluid intelligence, which basically is the ability

to perceive complex relationships and abstract reasoning, peaks at adolescence and gradually declines throughout adulthood. On the other hand, crystallized intelligence, which is the ability to perceive relationships and formal reasoning based on experience and cultural conditions, increases or remains stable up to about age 60.(10) Research supports the common sense notion that wisdom and experience somewhat compensates for youth. Youths perform well on tasks requiring quick insight, short-term memorization, and complex interactions. Older people accumulate knowledge, and based on experience, apply it.(1)

Older people have difficulty remembering if the learning is meaningless, complex, or the learning of new things requires the recall of old learning. A rapid speed of learning and large amounts of new information is typical of "school" learning, which favors youth. Adults perform best when learning is at a slower pace and calls for the integration, interpretation, and application of knowledge. Teachers which present new information that is meaningful at a somewhat slow pace, one idea at a time, in a way that it relates to previously learned information, with frequent summarization, will be more effective in helping the adult retain and recall the information.(1) We should remember, however, that learning ability varies greatly among individuals and some adults 60 and over learn better than people that are 20 years old.

A second principle of adult learning is that adults have widely different preferences, needs, backgrounds, and skills. Third, the experience of the learner is a major resource in learning situations. We should recognize also that past experience may prohibit learning. Adults may not attempt to learn now or try new things which at one time in the past were perceived as bad

experiences. Attitudes are very difficult to change. But good teachers of adults attempt to find the "teachable moment," when the new information can be related to the learner's past experience.

A fourth principle of adult learning is the adult's self-concept moves from dependency to independency as the individual grows in responsibilities, experience and confidence. Adults will resist being treated like children as their life roles lead them into adulthood status.

A fifth principle is adults tend to be life-centered in their orientation to learning. They are time-conscious and problem-oriented. With many demands on their time, adults seek learning experiences that help them solve immediate, real-life problems.(2)

A sixth principle is that active participation of the adult in the learning process contributes to learning. Seventh is a comfortable, supportive environment is a key to successful learning. And last, the eighth principle of adult learning that I wish to mention, is adults are motivated to learn by a variety of factors.(7)

Before we examine more closely why adults do or do not participate in adult education, let me summarize what I have said about how adults learn. I find that the following quote from Jennifer Roger's book, Adults Learning, says it best: (16, p.59)

> Adults learn best when they do not have to rely on memorizing, but can learn through activity at their own pace with material that seems relevant to their daily lives and uses their own experience. Finding right answers at the first attempt seems important. Generous practice will reinforce new skills. Adults who have been out of touch with learning can often improve their educational performance dramatically if they are helped by learning to learn.

Unfortunately, those adults who need your services the most, are least likely to participate in adult education. I recall one of your colleagues, who is in this audience, tell me not long ago that he tried desperately to get laid-off coal miners to take an adult education course. He asked the miners what courses they needed, and even talked union officials into letting him use the local UMW union building as the meeting place for the course. Better yet, the course was free. A credible person was found to teach the course and necessary teaching materials prepared. Your colleague and the course instructor showed up for the first night of class ready to help the laid-off miners become better educated. Only two miners showed up for the class, and it had to be cancelled. I'm sure each of you has a similar story. Let us examine this problem further, first by looking at why adults participate in adult education, and then at why they don't participate.

Many of my comments on these topics are drawn from a book written by K. Patricia Cross, a national authority on adult education from Harvard University. The title of her book is Adults As Learners. She reviewed over 1000 references in writing this classic text.(1) If you have not read it, I

suggest you obtain a copy and read it closely. It is a monumental work in the field of adult education and essential reading for those who plan programs for adults.

It is true that some adults learn just for the sake of learning; some to comply with requests of their employer; some for social relationship; some for professional advancement; some to escape boredom; and some to prepare for service to the community such as an emergency medical technician. Most reasons people give for why they participate in adult education relate consistently and logically to their life situations.

People without good jobs pursue further education to get a better job, and those with good jobs want to advance in their job status. Women, blue collar workers, especially factory workers, and the poorly educated are likely to want additional education to prepare for new jobs. On the other hand, men, professional workers, and college graduates typically seek education for job advancement. However, we should recognize that there is no one typical participation reason for all adults, and the reasons given may differ over time with changes in life roles or situations. For example, in the 1970s a high percentage of women wanted to prepare for a new job, especially if their last child had left home or after a divorce; whereas today many women may also be seeking education needed for job advancement. Just as important is the education sought by adults who retire from the job and now need to learn how to cope with their new role in life. These adults want to enhance their quality of life and use of leisure time.

Most adults give practical, pragmatic reasons for participating in adult education. They want practical rather than academic, applied rather than theoretical, and skills rather than knowledge or information. The need for information should be expected to increase somewhat, however, in an information-oriented society. But adults will also need skills for application of new technologies in the workplace. Most adults are goal-oriented learners, seeking to solve an immediate problem related to their life situation and role.

Why did the laid-off coal miners not attend the adult education course? There are many barriers to participation in adult education. Patricia Cross classified barriers under three headings: situational, institutional, and dispositional. Situational barriers are those related to a particular situation in life at a given time. Institutional barriers are those policies and practices that discourage working adults from participating in educational activities. Dispositional barriers relate to attitudes and self-perceptions about oneself as a learner.

The cost of education and lack of time are the most predominant barriers. It is somewhat ironic that adults with time often lack the money to take adult education courses, and people with money don't have the time usually because of job responsibilities. And women are more likely than men to suggest cost is a barrier. It should be noted, however, that ability to pay is not the same thing as willingness to pay. Most adults are more willing to pay for educational activities that may provide returns directly

related to their job or career. Child care is a significant barrier for women. Transportation may be a major barrier for the elderly and poor. Each of these barriers--cost, time, child care or home responsibilities, and transportation--are situational barriers to participation in adult learning activities.

Institutional barriers include scheduling problems which do not make courses accessible to part-time learners; course location problems; lack of courses that are interesting, practical, or relevant; lack of information about the courses offered; and procedural problems and time requirements. As you can see, a barrier may fit into one or more of the three classifications developed by Cross. Of the institutional barriers I just mentioned, adult learners complain most about inconvenient locations and scheduling, and lack of interesting or relevant courses. Obvious also is that many adults cannot and do not want to go to school full-time.

The third class of barrier, dispositional, may be the most overlooked barrier by those hoping to serve adults. It is easier for adults to say that they are too busy or the cost is too high, than say they are not interested in learning, are too old, or lack ability. I have already addressed the ability issue--adults can learn.

Some adults see learning as "schooling," and only appropriate for children. In her text entitled Adults Learning, Jennifer Rogers addresses the "self theory" concept of adults. Let me quote some of her comments: (16, p.37)

> At present it seems that it is almost as a deliberate denial of his (or her) adult status that the mature student submits himself (or herself) to further education. Adults are, after all, people who have come to acquire the status of maturity in their own and other people's eyes as husbands, wives, parents, friends, employers or employees. Perhaps this status and self-esteem is less robust than it appears, and is easily threatened when the adult is put back in what may appear to be the subordinate position of the learner.

Adults will want to preserve at least a part of their "self-image." They fear the possibility that they might make themselves look foolish, or expose themselves to failure. It is also likely that these adults would not want to risk the possibility of failing in the presence of children, especially relatives or close acquaintances with whom the adult perceives that he or she should maintain a status or image of superiority.

Unfortunately, some adults may have an inferiority complex toward education based on past "schooling" experiences. Adults who were told as children, because of failing experiences, that "education" was not for them, that they instead should learn a skill or trade, will generally not be motivated to learn in a formal school setting.

John Partridge, in his book entitled Life in a Secondary Modern School, suggests that asking boys to take their school work seriously, after they have failed every test and examination they have ever taken, is like suggesting to prisoners of war that they should voluntarily undertake eight hours of daily combat training.(15)

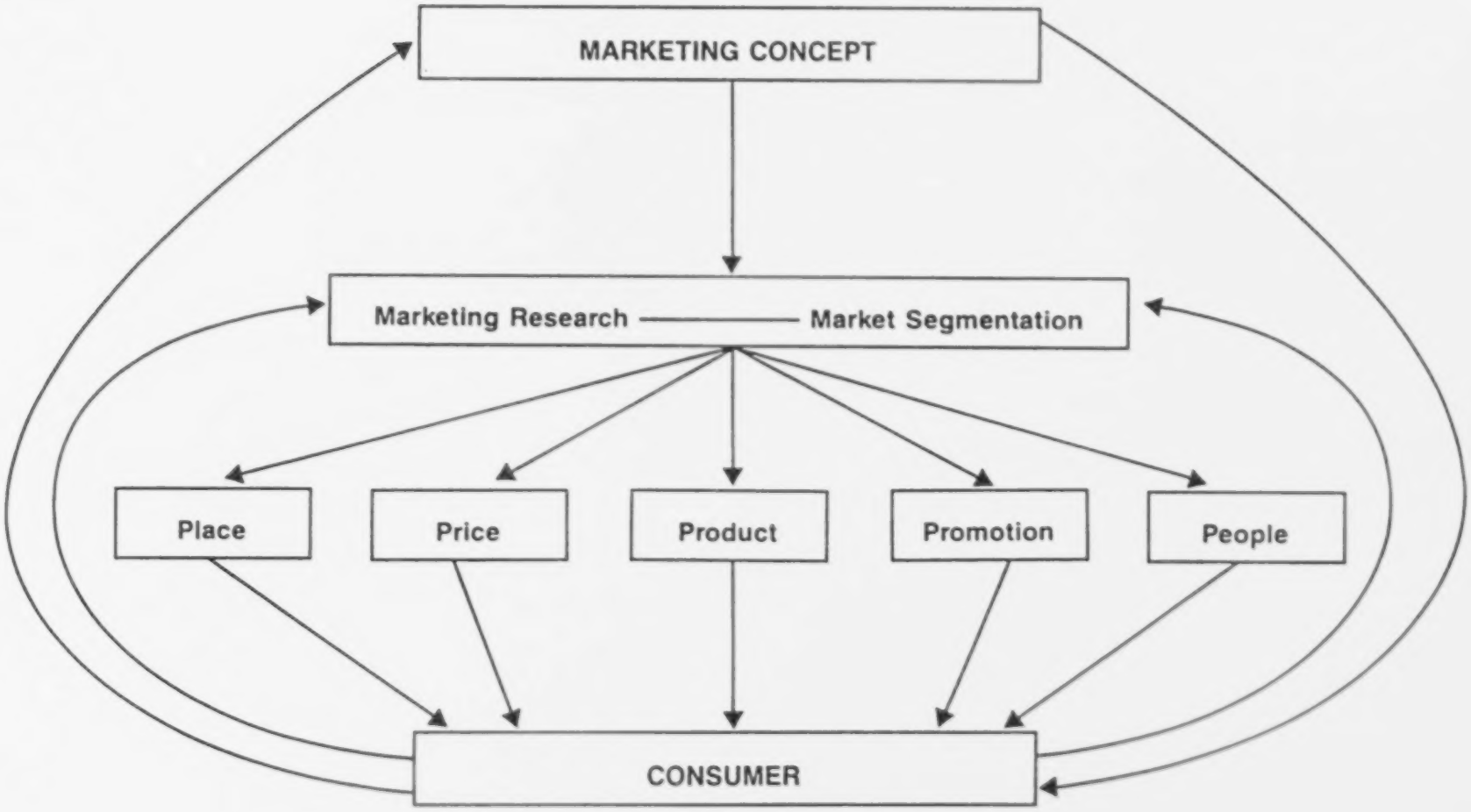
This one barrier of self-image is reason enough to request that secondary schools work harder to give youth successful experiences. They should help students open doors and develop a positive attitude toward the need for education and lifelong learning; not label them as "loosers," fit only to use their hands and not their minds. Doors closed in the high school experience may remain closed for a lifetime.

Why did the laid-off coal miners not attend the adult education course? I suspect the barriers were many. Your job as an adult educator is not easy. It may seem almost impossible to recruit some adults into an adult education course.

How can we plan programs that will meet the needs of adults? Perhaps we should consider using the modern marketing concept.(19) (see Figure 1) This would require us to view adults as consumers of adult education offerings. We would do market research of what the adults need or want, after segmenting the market into the different clientele groups such as:

- those who need education and training to enter the workforce.
- those who need retraining to replace skills made obsolete by new technology.
- those who need upgrading to obtain a promotion or perform a job more effectively.
- those who need education to obtain a required certificate or license.
- those who need only to further stimulate their intellectual curiosity.
- those who need to prepare for retirement and use of leisure time.
- those who need skills to meet avocational interests.
- those who need adult basic education or literacy skills to read a book to their children or grandchildren.(3)

FIGURE 1



Source: James R. Stone, Assistant Professor of Marketing and Distributive Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The modern marketing concept would require those who plan adult education to consider the 5 P's: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, and People. The key to successful marketing is to have the right product (program or courses), at the right price, in the right place, with the right promotion, using the right people.

It should be noted also that promotion alone will not attract adults into courses or programs that are low quality, unreasonably priced, offered in the wrong place, and taught by ineffective teachers. We stand our best change of meeting the needs of adults if we consider the 5 P's of marketing in view of the basic principles of adult learning, and reasons why adults do or do not participate in adult education.

Also of vital importance is the need to use the right mix of promotional activities. This is the last topic that I wish to address, before leaving you with some questions for teaching and serving adults through vocational-technical education.

What promotional activities have you used in the past to recruit adult learners? Looking back at the ones you have used, how effective were they? I think that we all would agree that no one best recruitment activity exists for all clientele groups. Based on the many different barriers to participation noted earlier, we can see why a mix of promotional activities is needed. Let me share with you some results of two studies on recruitment practices, one conducted in West Virginia, and one in Florida.

In 1984, Robert McMullen wrote a masters degree thesis on the public relations methods used to recruit adult vocational preparatory students in West Virginia.(11) Of the 418 people who responded to his survey, 43 were vocational administrators, 55 were vocational guidance counselors/job placement personnel, 21 were vocational teachers, and 299 were adult preparatory students. Some of his major findings were:

1. Newspaper advertisements and articles were used most often. Use of radio, brochures, and open house activities also ranked high. However, almost two-thirds of the teachers said they were not actively involved in recruitment of adults.

2. Newspapers were perceived to be most effective for recruiting adults. However, teachers perceived former students to play a large role in effective recruitment of adults.

3. Adult preparatory students indicated that they were most influenced by former students and newspapers. Interestingly, males found out about programs through the newspaper; females enrolled in programs because of advice from former students of the programs. Most part-time students were undecided if other adults in the community knew about adult programs at their area vocational center. They did believe that more adults should enroll in available programs, and that teachers can be very effective members of a public relations policy committee for recruiting adults.

4. Although television, newsletters and billboards had been used effectively for recruiting adults in other states, schools in West Virginia made little use of these methods. Noted also was that only older adults consistently read daily newspapers, and younger adults may have to be reached by other media. McMullen indicated that the most effective TV coverage could be provided by the State Department of Education, because of its high cost compared to limited budgets in individual school systems. (We've done it! I hope all of you are aware of our West Virginia Jobs advertisement on TV. It has been successful.)

5. Few schools had a public relations specialist. Administrators handled most public relations efforts. McMullen recommended that if funds are not available to hire a full-time public-relations person, then the task should at least be administered by a committee. He recommended a committee comprised of administrators, teachers, and parents or adult alumni.

He believed that a complete, how-to recruitment manual would be useful at the local school level. The manual would include form ads which could be copied, a state vocational emblem to be used in all ads and news releases, sample TV commercials, sample radio scripts, a list of projects and promotions, speaker training aids, and school climate workshop information.

Let us now turn briefly to the Florida study.(17) The study focused on recruitment barriers to postsecondary vocational training programs. One of

the study's objectives was to identify and describe recruitment practices that have been used successfully by area vocational schools to attract disadvantaged, unemployed, underemployed, and out-of-school youth. Information was received from students, teachers, counselors and administrators.

What practices were used most often? A survey of regional and local vocational school directors revealed that the top 10 practices, in mean rank order, (success rank in parentheses) were:

USE RANK	RECRUITMENT PRACTICE	SUCCESS RANK
1	Utilization of display booths at state fairs, exhibitions, malls, etc.	(14)
2	Personal contacts with prospective students made by past and present students.	(3)
2	Development of slide tape presentations for distribution throughout the region.	(8)
4	Visits to feeder schools made by vocational school staff and students.	(12)
5	Recruit through community organizations dealing with special target groups.	(6)
5	Instructors and counselors speaking to groups, schools, or organizations representing special target groups.	(15)
7	Participation in recruitment programs conducted by high schools.	(9)
7	Providing tours of vocational programs for prospective students.	(10)
9	Advertising programs in local newspapers.	(2)
10	Use of open houses.	(17)

Of the top 10 activities used most often, 6 were also among the top 10 perceived by vocational directors as most successful.

What activities were most successful? The top 10, in rank order, (use rank in parentheses) were:

SUCCESS RANK	RECRUITMENT PRACTICE	USE RANK
1	Encouraging high school students to take courses while completing graduation requirements at their high school.	(11)
2	Advertising programs in local newspapers.	(9)
3	Personal contacts with prospective students made by past and present students.	(2)
4	Mass mailings of the school schedule to prospective students.	(16)
5	Utilization of special displays emphasizing the success of students who completed vocational programs (personal interviews on tapes and slides).	(22)
6	Recruit through community organization dealing with special target groups.	(5)
6	Advertisements or flyers sent to parents.	(28)
8	Development of slide tape presentations for distribution throughout the region.	(3)
9	Participation in recruitment programs conducted by high schools.	(7)
10	Providing tours of vocational programs for prospective students.	(8)

Of the 10 most successful practices, 3 ranked low in terms of use. (See practices ranked 16, 22 and 28 in parentheses.)

It is essential that we recognize the need to use the proper mix of promotional activities to recruit adult learners. Of course, cost, time and other factors will affect the activities that can be used. Also, it is likely that some activities will be more effective with certain adult clientele groups.

You will receive a copy of the comments I've made today. Included in the paper will be a list of 23 recruitment practices/ideas that the directors of area vocational schools in Florida found particularly successful. I think you will find them interesting, and maybe appropriate for promoting your adult courses.

Other Successful Recruitment Practices Identified in the Florida Study

1. Encouraging the public to use the school facility as a meeting place to get exposure.
2. Panel of advisory committee members put on an annual program for counselors and principals throughout the area.
3. Establishment of vocational committee in the Chamber of Commerce.
4. Recruit through vocational student organizations.
5. Take a piece of equipment (i.e., memory typewriter) to the high school and demonstrate its use along with typing a letter to each student's parents.
6. Designation of a staff person to be specifically responsible for recruitment.

7. Establishment of a minority recruiter.

8. Designation of the last day of school before Christmas as family day and bring all family members on campus.

9. Designation of the last day in June as alumni day and bring alumni in to share success stories.

10. Obtain a monthly list of high school dropouts and write them to offer a 3-month scholarship to the school.

11. Offering scholarships to high school graduates and to all who pass the GED.

12. Sending letters to businesses, community clubs, and program advisory committees giving them a scholarship to award to any student they might select.

13. Utilizing program-based budgeting.

14. Establishment of a "SWAT" team to provide immediate response to business and industry training needs.

15. Establishment of brochure rack in each area high school.

16. Establishing recruitment as part of the written job responsibility of every staff member.

17. Watching for divorces and separations and calling to offer job re-entry training.

18. Housing the professional library for teachers in the vocational school.

19. Offering a course for parents titled "How to Help Your Child Select a Career."

20. Utilizing bumper stickers to promote various programs.

21. Direct hiring of students through the school by area employers.

22. Billboards on the highways in the area.

23. Referral of job applicants by companies who believe an applicant is not qualified for a job.

Now, let me conclude my comments by raising some questions relative to teaching and serving adults through vocational-technical education. Perhaps

they will stimulate further discussion on this important topic as you attend the remaining two days of this conference.

What will be the philosophy of adult education in West Virginia? Each of you has a philosophy about life which serves as a framework for the way you think, the decisions you make, and the actions you take. So too, must you have a well-defined philosophy of adult education to give form, focus, and function to efforts intended to meet the needs of adult learners.

How will we convince those in the political arena that adult vocational-technical education is not a luxury, but absolutely essential for helping the majority of our state's citizens improve their economic prosperity and quality of life?

We have some excellent area vocational centers in West Virginia. How can we make these centers more effective for serving adults, as is recommended in the report on redesigning and refocusing vocational education in the state? How can we use more distance education and instructional technology to make courses more accessible and convenient for adults?

What types of courses and programs are needed to meet the needs of the different adult clientele groups, considering the many reasons why adults choose to participate in adult education. And what marketing strategies and promotional practices will be needed to recruit adults?

How can we encourage vocational-technical teachers to become more involved in serving adults? Will the majority of full-time teachers in secondary programs make a sincere commitment to learning how to best teach adults? Should we also consider using local business and industry personnel as part-time instructors for offering evening courses for adults at area vocational centers?

How can we create more partnerships between business/industry and vocational-technical education, which might include teaching courses at the workplace? How can we create better articulation between the academic and vocational programs at high schools and area vocational centers to provide students with prerequisites needed for succeeding in more advanced programs at the postsecondary level?

What criteria should be used to measure the effectiveness of adult education offerings? Will consideration be given to the fact that adults are "stop outs" rather than "drop outs," stopping and starting their involvement in adult education based on short-term goals? Many adults may never complete a "program" when a few "courses" enable them to meet their occupational goal.

How should we recognize or reward completers of adult education programs? Should they receive an advanced certificate, an associate degree, or both? Do we need some type of statewide recognition program for adults who complete vocational-technical education programs?

An finally, what policies should be mandated or legislated to assure that adult vocational-technical education achievers it rightful place in the educational system. Lifelong learning is clearly a necessity in our society

today. We most likely will "win the battle and loose the war" if our commitment to adult education stops with adult basic education literacy programs. ABE is only the beginning!

There are no easy answers to the questions I have posed. Yet we must search for answers if West Virginia is to compete in the national and international marketplace in the 21st century. Sir Walter Scott, a famous author in the early 1800s, once said the three most important letters in the English language were N, O, and W.

Ladies and gentlemen, I suggest that NOW is the time to examine your role as adult educators, and your commitment to teaching and serving adults. Those children who started to kindergarten less than one month ago will be in the high school graduating class of the year 2000.

As we celebrate the 200th anniversary of our Constitution, let us recognize that education is not a destination, but a journey that each individual citizen in our society must travel throughout life. Education must be perceived not as an escape from work, but as preparation for life and the workplace.

Adult vocational-technical education can help people earn a good living and live a good life. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are inalienable rights guaranteed in the Constitution. But those persons who fail to make the educational journey may find little happiness in life in the 21st century.

You have an enormous challenge and opportunity to make West Virginia a place where "Mountaineers are always free," educated, and capable of living the good life. The time for committing ourselves to teaching and serving adults in West Virginia is now.

It has been a pleasure to be with you on this first day of autumn. Best wishes and Godspeed as you go about your important tasks at this conference.

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